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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4199
INFO AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY
CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY 4225

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000148

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ASEC CASC KE PGOV PREF
SUBJECT: KENYA: JANUARY 15, 2008 STATUS REPORT

REF: NAIROBI 126 AND PREVIOUS

11. (U) AS OF 01/15 1900 HOURS (NAIROBI TIME):

SECURITY: NATION-WIDE, CALM BUT TENSE. NO INCIDENTS REPORTED. POLICE REMAIN DEPLOYED AND ACTIVE, ESPECIALLY IN DOWNTOWN NAIROBI AROUND THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING WHERE THE NEW PARLIAMENT CONVENED TODAY TO ELECT A SPEAKER AND DEPUTY. MAJOR TRAFFIC DISRUPTIONS. ODM HAS CALLED FOR PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS IN NAIROBI AND OTHER ODM STRONGHOLDS, BEGINNING TOMORROW (JANUARY 16) AND CONTINUING THROUGH FRIDAY, JANUARY 18.

SPORADIC ROADBLOCKS BY ILLEGAL GANGS CONTINUE TO IMPEDE SECURITY AND TRAVEL IN RURAL AREAS APPROACHING/LEAVING MAJOR CITIES. THESE ROADBLOCKS ARE USED TO ELICIT MONEY FOR SAFE PASSAGE AND/OR THREATEN KENYANS ON THE BASIS OF ETHNICITY ("ETHNIC SCREENING"). TO DATE, NO REPORTS OF AMERICANS BEING STOPPED OR THREATENED. AS FAST AS POLICE CLEAR THESE ROADBLOCKS, THEY REAPPEAR.

MISSION/RSO CONTINUES TO MONITOR SITUATION CLOSELY, PARTICULARLY IN KISUMU (NYANZA PROVINCE) WHERE WE HAVE USG EMPLOYEES AND FAMILIES. RUMOR IS RIFE IN KISUMU AND KERICHO THAT UGANDAN MILITARY HAVE DEPLOYED INTO KENYA, TO SUPPORT PRESIDENT KIBAKI AND ASSIST KENYAN POLICE TO KEEP ORDER IN WESTERN/LUO AND KALENJIN AREAS. EMBASSY KAMPALA HAS MET WITH GOU AND DEBUNKED THIS RUMOR.

USAID/OFDA HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TEAM RETURNED TO NAIROBI TODAY, AFTER A 6-DAY ROAD TRIP THROUGH WESTERN KENYA. THEY HAD NO ROAD INCIDENTS.

PEACE CORPS DID NOT/NOT SEND ITS REGIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY OFFICER TO KISUMU TODAY. IN CONSULTATION WITH PC/WASHINGTON, PC/NAIROBI HAS DECIDED TO OFFER THE PCVS MOVED FROM WESTERN KENYA THE OPTION OF EITHER "INTERRUPTED SERVICE" OR TRANSFER TO ANOTHER PC COUNTRY PROGRAM IN AFRICA. THOSE WHO CHOSE "INTERRUPTED SERVICE" WOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO RETURN TO KENYA IN COMING WEEKS OR MONTHS FOR ASSIGNMENTS ELSEWHERE IN KENYA.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: FORMER SG KOFI ANNAN ARRIVES TONIGHT. THE AMBASSADOR IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH HIM TOMORROW (JANUARY 16) MID-DAY. CURRENT PLAN IS FOR ANNAN TO MEET WITH KIBAKI AND RAILA SEPARATELY TOMORROW AFTERNOON.

MISSION PERSONNEL: EMBASSY -- AND CDC AND MRU OFFICES -- IN NAIROBI AND KISUMU -- WERE OPEN FOR BUSINESS TODAY. ALL OFFICIAL AMERICANS AND FSN/LES EMPLOYEES ARE ACCOUNTED FOR; AGENCY AND SECTION HEADS HAVE BEEN REMINDED TO NOTIFY AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH TDY VISITORS. AMBASSADOR HELD AN ALL HANDS TOWN HALL MEETING ON JANUARY 14.

AMCITS: NO REPORTS OF CASUALTIES TO DATE. AMBASSADOR HAS SCHEDULED A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 18.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF KENYA (ISK) ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT IT WILL BE CLOSED TOMORROW BECAUSE OF ANTICIPATED TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES (DUE TO DEMONSTRATIONS) FOR LOCAL STAFF

(INCLUDING
BUS DRIVERS). ISK WILL DECIDE TOMORROW WHETHER OR NOT TO
OPEN ON THURSDAY.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: PARLIAMENT CONVENED THIS AFTERNOON TO ELECT A SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER. AFTER SPENDING AN HOUR DEBATING PROCEDURES, THE BALLOTTING COMMENCED. AS OF THE END OF THE SECOND ROUND OF VOTING, NO CANDIDATE HAD THE NECESSARY TWO-THIRDS (148) OF VOTES. (THE SECOND ROUND RESULT WAS: (PNU CANDIDATE) KAPARO 102 AND (ODM CANDIDATE) MARENDE 104. AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, A THIRD ROUND RUNOFF IS BEING CONDUCTED BETWEEN THE TWO. ONLY A SIMPLE MAJORITY IS REQUIRED AT THIS STAGE.

THE SESSION WILL CONTINUE THROUGH THE EVENING UNTIL BOTH SPEAKER AND DEPUTY ARE ELECTED. PARLIAMENT WILL THEN ADJOURN UNTIL MARCH.

RANNEBERGER